

March 1, 2016

The Honorable Thomas Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I am writing to request that you expedite consideration of a limited waiver petition submitted by the Enlarged City School District of Middletown with respect to Section 64.1601(b) of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) rules. The waiver would allow the Middletown School District to access vital caller identification information, such as the calling party number (CPN), from individuals placing false terror threats using a restricted phone number.

Over the past year, the Middletown School District has been plagued by "swatting" attacks, in which a caller has repeatedly made threats of violence against schools. In fact, since the beginning of this school year, the Middletown School District has experienced 13 instances of swatting calls, with half of the calls made to Maple Hill Elementary School alone. The Middletown School District has now had more swatting incidents than any other school district in the country. The damage from these calls is far-reaching, often disrupting classrooms, temporarily closing down surrounding streets and businesses, and requiring the deployment of armed SWAT teams, bomb squads and other police units. As you can imagine, these attacks have traumatized the community of Middletown and disrupt the lives of students, parents and school personnel. Despite extensive investigatory efforts, neither the School District nor law enforcement have been able to locate the perpetrator of these cruel and terrifying hoaxes, largely because he or she is hiding behind blocked numbers.

An approval of a Section 64.1601(b) waiver could significantly enhance Middletown's efforts to investigate these alarming threats. Access to the restricted CPNs, which would be stored in a centralized location, will allow critical school personnel and law enforcement officials to coordinate with one another in their attempts to quickly respond to swatting calls made to the Middletown School District. Without the ability to determine the validity of each threat and take proper precautions, perpetrators are allowed to hide in the shadows while they instill fear and panic into the students of the Middletown community. This is simply unacceptable. Middletown schools deserve access to all of the tools needed to ensure these criminals meet justice.

There is important precedent for the Commission to grant the kind of special request Middletown is making, including prior waivers granted under similar circumstances to the Liberty School District in Missouri and to NASA.



The Commission has had a long and distinguished history of ensuring that its rules maintain the careful balance between privacy and public safety, and I strongly believe this is a situation where public safety must prevail. As Middletown continues to combat this frightening plague, I urge the FCC to consider their limited waiver petition before any more precious hours of education are lost.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles E. Schumer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Charles E. Schumer